

The Director

Central Intelligence Agency

Executive Registry

77-7869/B



Washington, D.C. 20505

Congress
14 June

23 June 1977

The Honorable Leo J. Ryan
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Ryan:

Thank you for your letter of June 9 requesting unclassified information on the location of the Soviet and Japanese whaling fleets in the Pacific.

The attached response may be less precise than you had hoped for, but it is the best we can provide in an unclassified mode. The Naval Ocean Surveillance Information Center at Suitland, Maryland is capable of compiling classified position reports on the Soviet whaling fleet.

I would be happy to request these reports for your perusal or you may want to deal with the Center directly. We at CIA also are prepared to give you in depth briefings on the Soviet and Japanese fishing industry and other maritime matters if you feel they would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,

STANSFIELD TURNER

Executive Registry to Congress

Soviet and Japanese Whaling Operations in the Pacific

The Soviet Union and Japan, the two largest whaling nations, captured over 25,000 whales during the 1975-76 season, or about 85% of the total harvested. Using floating factory ships attended by catcher vessels and spotter aircraft, their fleets can pursue whales around the world.

The USSR's whaling fleet ranks first in the world in size and consists of four mother ships and approximately 90 catcher boats totaling about 175,000 GRT. It operates in the Antarctic Ocean and in the Pacific Ocean near the Aleutian, Kurile and Commander Islands. The Japanese fleet, although the second largest in the world, is only about half the size of the Soviet fleet, consisting of three mother ships and about 45 catcher vessels totaling close to 90,000 GRT. It too operates mostly in the Antarctic and Pacific Oceans, although coastal whaling off of Japan is also prominent.

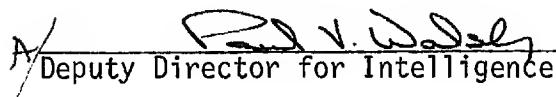
We have no detailed information on the current location of the Soviet and Japanese whaling fleets in the Pacific. Soviet whaling operations in the Pacific Ocean -- which generally consist of two mother ships and around 20 catcher boats -- have, however, been traditionally concentrated in the area between Guam, the Aleutian and the Hawaiian islands between 1 May and 31 July. In August, the Pacific operations follow the migratory patterns of whales along the US west coast and Alaska. Soviet whaling in the Pacific normally ends in September or October, when the fleet returns to Soviet ports and is readied for Antarctic operations between October and May.

Japanese whaling operations are generally in the same areas of the Pacific, although its fleet is centered closer to Japan. Currently, there are an estimated 10 Japanese whaling vessels operating in the North Pacific, including one and possibly two mother ships.

UNCLASSIFIED

LETTER TO: The Honorable Leo J. Ryan
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

CONCUR:


Deputy Director for Intelligence

6-17-77
Date

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House of Representatives

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REPLY TO:
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(415) 349-1978

June 9, 1977

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

Without inquiring into classified matters, would you please inform me as precisely as possible as to the whereabouts of the Russian and Japanese whaling fleet in the Pacific commencing on June 15, 1977 through July 31, 1977.

I would appreciate your efforts to give this request immediate consideration.

Sincerely yours,


LEO J. RYAN
Member of Congress

LJR:js

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Office of Legislative Counsel

OLC #77-2407/a

14 JUN 1977

Honorable Leo J. Ryan
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Ryan:

This acknowledges receipt of your letter of 9 June to the Director requesting any unclassified information as to the whereabouts of the Russian and Japanese whaling fleets in the Pacific from 15 June 1977 to 31 July 1977.

Available information is being reviewed and we will provide a response to you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

/5/

George L. Cary
Legislative Counsel

STAT

cc: DDI [redacted]
ER